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PETER PARKER AND ALBERT SCHWEITZER: MOTIVATION AND  
CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO THEIR MISSIONARY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

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## INTRODUCTION

## INTRODUCTION

### A. The Problem Stated and the Present Study Justified

The problem of this study is to analyze the experiences of two outstanding medical missionaries, Peter Parker and Albert Schweitzer, in order to discover the primary motivation in their lives and those traits of character and skills that contributed to their being successful missionaries.

The question of motivation is a difficult one but is easier to understand in the lives of some men than in the lives of others. Take, for example, the life of a man who, we shall say, was brought up in New York City. His father was a doctor. The boy went to college and then to the same medical school from which his father had been graduated. After receiving his medical degree, he assisted in his father's practice and took over the prosperous practice at his father's death. Normally, in the study of this man's life we would not be greatly challenged by the fact that he was a doctor in New York City, for he acted as expected.

The two medical missionaries considered in this study, however, present an entirely different situation. These men gave up the fellowship of life-long friends, the possibility of a prosperous medical practice and comfortable home life, and the conveniences of highly civilized nations in order to serve people in obscure parts of the world. In the study of such lives, the question is paramount: Why

did they desire and want to be medical missionaries? The question necessitates a study of the motivation in their lives.

To see a man who is outstanding in his field of endeavor is to wonder how he became successful. Why were not George Washington, Thomas Edison and Charles Spurgeon like the ordinary men about them? What made the difference in their lives between successful endeavor and mediocre achievement?

The same problem presents itself in the study of the lives of Parker and Schweitzer. In such a study there is need to discover what character traits and skills they possessed that made their efforts bear fruit. The analysis of these problems can give the following values: (1) The value of seeing the power of certain ideals and desires worked out in actual life; (2) the value of seeing the pragmatic test used to corroborate the truth of certain ideals and types of behavior; (3) the value of satisfying one's desire to understand why a person acted as he did; (4) the value of seeing the practical results to which the holding of certain ideals and desires leads.

The selection of Parker and Schweitzer for this study was made for several reasons. It is generally agreed that these men were outstanding in their work; thus it will be unnecessary to justify their achievements before going into a study of their motivation and the significant factors in their missionary accomplishments. In classifying these men as outstanding, no reference is being made to the worth of their achievements, but rather to the fact that they successfully accomplished what they intended to do. The work of Parker and Schweitzer was done in two distinct types of environment; Peter Parker's in the



ancient civilization of China, and Albert Schweitzer's in primitive Africa. Through them the work of medical missions will be seen more representatively. Peter Parker is recognized as the first modern medical missionary, and in him we see medical missions in their beginning, whereas Schweitzer still lives today.<sup>1</sup> Parker represents the ordinary orthodox concept of missionary motivation, while Schweitzer is not an orthodox Christian in the historic sense but is motivated rather by a more humanitarian drive. Because his views differ from Parker's, a study of Schweitzer's life will make certain contributions which would be missed if his life were omitted.

#### B. The Limitation of the Study

This study is concerned with that material from the life and thought of these men that will give insight into their motivation and give the significant factors in their missionary accomplishments. No attempt will be made to present any chronological continuity.

It is not within the scope of this study to evaluate, philosophically or theologically, the worth of missionary accomplishments of these men. However, a real problem presents itself in the evaluation of their work. The problem would revolve around such issues as: What is the relation between meeting the physical needs of people and the essential Christian message? What is the relation between Christian doctrine and Christian life? Can any who do not embody the unique, historic Christian doctrines make a valuable contribution to

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1. H. Clay Trumbull, Old Time Student Volunteers, p. 108.

the Christian missionary enterprise? This latter problem would arise primarily in the case of Albert Schweitzer, who does not hold some of the fundamental doctrines of historic Christianity. Secondly, the problem would arise because of some who question the basic idea of medical missions and their worth. This study will present, rather than evaluate, the motivation and the factors influential in the missionary accomplishments of Parker and Schweitzer.

#### C. The Plan of the Study

Chapter I will treat the life and thought of Peter Parker with respect to his motivation and the significant factors in his missionary accomplishments. Albert Schweitzer's life and thought will be treated in the same manner in Chapter II. The first two chapters will be individual entities within themselves; neither presupposes the other. By so doing each man will be understood as he is, not colored by the light of the other. On the basis of the understanding of the two men presented in the first two chapters, the third chapter will give a comparison of the men. The comparison will point up their essential likeness and difference, and the influence of these on their ministries. The final chapter will be a general summary and conclusion of the findings of the study.

#### D. The Sources for the Study

The sources for this study include:

1. The writings of Parker and Schweitzer.
2. Biographies of both men.
3. Books dealing with special phases of their work.
4. Books dealing with the theological and philosophical concepts of these men.

CHAPTER I

THE MOTIVATION AND CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO THE MISSIONARY

ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF PETER PARKER

## CHAPTER I

### THE MOTIVATION AND CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO THE MISSIONARY ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF PETER PARKER

#### A. Introduction

Peter Parker was the first modern medical missionary. He was strongly evangelical in his religious emphasis. The objective of this chapter is to present an understanding of this medical missionary in terms of the motivating elements in his life and the significant factors which led to his missionary accomplishments.

#### B. Peter Parker's Motivation as Seen in His Religious Experience

##### 1. Introduction

The story of Moses' leading the Israelites out of the land of Egypt has always proved interesting. Of no less interest is Moses' religious experience, itself, and why he embarked on so great an undertaking. An understanding of Moses' experience is rendered easier by the simplicity of the motivation for his task. Moses' motivation may be understood not in terms of the social pressures of his day, or of an adventuresome spirit, or of an inward desire to aid a suffering humanity; but it is understood rather in terms of his religious experience.<sup>1</sup> It was Moses' relationship to his God that explains why he undertook his great task.

. . . . .

##### 1. Exodus 2

Of like simplicity was the motivation of Peter Parker for his task in another ancient civilization--China. The reason why Peter Parker undertook his sacrificial service is also found in his religious experience.

2. Factors in His Early Years that Led to a Commitment of His Life to God.

There was a manifested hostility to spiritual matters in Parker's early years. This opposition to the religion of his childhood was in spite of devoted Christian parents who were active in the Orthodox or Trinitarian church of Framingham, Massachusetts, in the early nineteenth century.

Parker's early dislike for religion can best be seen in his own words:

I was customarily required to attend public worship, which truly afforded me no satisfaction otherwise than my curiosity was amused with whatever I saw that was new and dazzling to the fancy...usually there was nothing in sermons that gave me pleasure but their close. This was anticipated with impatience and heard with joy...The public services of the Sabbath were not more tedious than the religious instructions of my parents were irksome...Such was my reluctance to repeat the Lord's Prayer that I frequently cried when required to do it...

This attitude continued with varying degrees to his middle teens.

The first religious teaching which made an indelible impression on his mind came at the age of six or seven years. This was precipitated by the remarks of a pious instructor at school concerning God's giving the Ten Commandments to Moses and the Israelites at Mount Sinai. 'If God spoke to them in the midst of thunderings, and earth-

. . . . .

1. George B. Stevens, The Life of Peter Parker, M.D., p. 6.

quakes, and a terrible tempest when the commandments were laid down,"<sup>1</sup> said the teacher, "how do you think God will do when he comes to take them up in the end of the world and finds the commandments broken?"<sup>1</sup> The consideration of this question filled the boy's soul with dread. A morbid seriousness developed along with his distaste for religion which continued into his teens.

From time to time he read in the New Testament. The message he read developed within him a sense and conviction of sin; so that he would cry out, "Oh, that I had never been born!" As is the natural reaction of a person in this state, he sought to save himself. However, his good resolutions were quickly followed by discouraging failures.

It was impossible for Parker to hide his mental and spiritual anguish from his parents. The parents wisely refrained from forcing the boy into any decision, but placed in conspicuous places constructive religious books. These he read with some help, although his soul still did not find peace with God. The great burden of sin which this teen-age boy was carrying only rolled off after a talk with his father, helped by his mother.<sup>2</sup>

This important talk with his father came near the end of a day's work in the field. Telling his father that he was unprepared to leave this world, he cried out in despair through his tears, "What shall I do to be saved?" He does not remember having heard that question before, but it expressed the sincere desire of his heart. His mother, joining the conversation, pointed her son to Jesus Christ who saves.

. . . . .

1. Ibid., p. 7.
2. Ibid., pp. 8,9.

That night he spent wrestling with God, his pillow bathed with tears. When morning came he had a new sense of the nearness of God; he was conscious of his sins being forgiven and his distress gone. His boyhood antagonism to religion was dispelled. He began to consider the glory of his God in the decisions he made.

### 3. His Call to Missionary Service.

Only a year after his conversion Peter Parker began to express the desire to proclaim the gospel to others. This awakened interest manifested itself following a serious sickness in which there was much concern for his very life.<sup>1</sup> During the sickness he states that he was not apprehensive for his own life, for he had secret longings to depart. His life being spared him, he took definite steps toward a more active participation in the work of the church. To serve God became a growing ambition.

In considering the work of the ministry, Parker meditated on the worth of such a task. He sought to reason from the standpoint of one who was standing in eternity and looking back over his life. From this position he came to the following conclusion:

Reason, and I trust the Holy Spirit, suggested to me that it would then afford me the highest possible felicity to remember that I had spent and been spent in the service of God. All human pursuits that did not tend directly to promote the divine glory seemed unworthy my regard. The honors and riches of this world I esteemed as vanity. To spend and be spent in the service of God I considered as implying a direct, exclusive, and entire consecration of time and talents, of poverty and influence, of all the powers of the mind, and soul, to him.<sup>2</sup>

. . . . .

1. Ibid., p. 13.
2. Ibid., p. 15

The deep longing of his heart is seen to be service for his God.

Parker could not think about a college training and the regular ministry, for his father had made it clear to him that he was needed at home. For two years he continued to consider these matters in his heart. At length he went to talk to Dr. Kellogg, his pastor, about becoming a preacher. Dr. Kellogg strongly discouraged him in his ideals, saying that many young Christians falsely believe that the only way to serve Christ is by being a preacher.

By the time he was twenty-two years old--several years after his talk with Dr. Kellogg--provision was made for the financial support of his parents. Released from parental responsibilities, he felt free to make preparation for college entrance. Dr. Kellogg now agreed with Peter, since his parents were cared for and his interest in preaching had remained strong.

The crucial decision for the mission field came during his senior year at Yale College. During one vacation he gave over an entire day to prayer and meditation on the question: "Is it my duty and privilege to become a foreign missionary?"<sup>1</sup> To answer this question, he set down four other questions which he considered at length:

1. What are my qualifications as it regards natural and acquired ability and piety?
2. What are my feelings upon the subject?
3. Why prefer a foreign to a domestic mission?
4. What are my motives? By what am I actuated? What was it at first; what is it now?

After answering these questions to his satisfaction he concluded:

. . . . .

1. Ibid., p. 44.
2. Ibid., p. 44.



"While there are some obstacles still in the way, the preponderance of arguments is in favor of my being a foreign missionary, unless, in the Providence of God, prevented."<sup>1</sup>

Having made this personal study, he then sought the counsel and advice of friends whom he respected. The result of his personal prayer and meditation and the counsel of friends was a strong conviction that God was calling him to the mission field.

Peter Parker believed that God wanted him on the mission field. He concluded that he should go to China as a medical doctor. This decision was based on his belief in the effectiveness of medicine as a means to provide opportunities for the presentation of the gospel. Though spiritual matters may be nebulous to the heathen, bodily pain and discomfort are very real. By meeting the people at their point of need, entrance into their hearts for the presentation of the gospel would be gained. His medical skill, therefore, would increase his effectiveness as a servant of God.

He determined to go to China under the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, after coming to realize the great need in that field.

Peter Parker's own words, written on the day of his ordination to the ministry, indicate his devotion to his missionary call.

I have this evening been ordained to the work of the ministry of Jesus Christ, as his herald to the heathen...I have looked forward long and with great interest to this work. Previous to the meeting I was enabled to make a full and entire surrender of all I have to God. Oh, my God, to thee I may say it, there

. . . . .

1. Ibid., p. 52.

is something that appears like the feeling of a martyr that possesses my bosom. I am entirely thine, and forever thine. On condition that thy grace be sufficient for me, I will not shrink from taking an apostle for my example. With him I shall suffer hardships like a good soldier. I can meet perils by the deep, among false brethren and heathen. To the charge delivered me I respond with a hearty Amen. God helping me I will preach the gospel, and nothing but the gospel, and sooner let me go to the stake than to yield one iota of the gospel to the dishonor of Jesus, my Master. I bless the Lord for the occasion and all its attendant circumstances. Oh, my unworthiness! I felt at the close of the services that I wanted to lie down in the dust before my Maker. Who, or what am I, that I should be called to this sacred work! I thought during the services of what I once was--a poor lost wanderer from the fold of Christ. I thought of days that are gone, and adored the God who had thus mysteriously led me on. Great God, let me make the return of a life wholly devoted to thee!<sup>1</sup>

#### 4. His Passion for Serving God.

Peter Parker burned with the desire to serve God in the preaching of the gospel. On the very day in which he was united with the church, he established family worship in his home with the consent of his parents.

In his student days he sought and made many opportunities for the preaching of the gospel. As a student of Amherst College, in the 1820's, he visited the poor in almshouses and the convicts in prison.<sup>2</sup> At Yale College he spoke at schools, visited poor families, and preached in prisons.<sup>3</sup> A great revival broke out on the Yale campus during his senior year. Humanly speaking, Parker, the prospective missionary, was responsible for the revival. His prayers and counsel were much in demand by his fellow students.

. . . . .

1. Ibid., pp. 80,81.
2. James H. Franklin, Ministers of Mercy, pp. 148-152.
3. Stevens, op. cit., Chapter 3.

His trip to China was not a vacation which he was to enjoy prior to entering his missionary work, but was an opportunity to serve. On board ship he organized Bible classes and conducted worship services.<sup>1</sup>

Parker's passion to serve his God is seen not only in the work that he accomplished, but also in the spirit in which he did it. His consuming interest in his work is seen in such statements as: "If I am not deceived, there is no subject which so much interests my whole soul as the condition of the heathen."<sup>2</sup> All of his talents and energy were concentrated in serving God. Parker's service took the form of winning the lost for Christ, and leading Christians into a deeper walk with his Lord.

5. The Place He Gave to Personal Fellowship with God--His Dynamic Relation to God

After Parker's conversion in his teens, God was no longer an intellectual concept to him, but a real Father. Each day he sought to live in communion with his Father. Prayer and the study of the Bible were important features of his life. He sought to meet every situation in life in the strength and wisdom of God.

We have already noted that it was through prayer and meditation that he determined upon his work as a missionary. This spirit of prayer and dependence upon God is seen throughout his life. When beginning his work as a medical missionary, he determined to learn the native language in order to be able to present Christ at the same time that he was

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1. Franklin, op. cit., p. 162.
2. Stevens, op. cit., p. 37.

administering medical assistance. His very medical skill presented a problem in this matter. So great were the demands being made on his time in the practice of medicine that he had little time to devote to his study of the native language. At the time when he was considering this problem, he wrote: "In prayer this morning the same subject rested like a mountain upon me, and my cry was fervent to my strong Deliverer that I might find a relief."<sup>1</sup> His request was granted. He was moved to a different mission station where he was able to devote all his time to the study of the foreign language.

An incident when sailing on the China seas illustrates the closeness of his fellowship with God. The report of pirates on some parts of the China seas was being circulated. However, there was no fear that pirates would be encountered on the passage from Singapore to Malacca. The crew, as well as the passengers, was confident as the ship set sail. When out of sight of land and any available help, a pirate ship was sighted and panic seized all on board except Parker. He was more taken up with prayer to God than in fear of pirates. He did his best to alleviate the apprehensions of his fellow passengers. Soon after, as if in answer to his prayer, a wind began to blow that enabled the large-sailed passenger ship to escape the smaller pirate vessel. At eight o'clock that evening he recorded:

All was still, and my heart overflowed with devout gratitude to God as I read from the one hundred and twentieth to the one hundred and twenty-fourth Psalm, and led my fellow passengers in prayer and praise to our high Deliverer.<sup>2</sup>

. . . . .

1. Ibid., p. 112.
2. Ibid., p. 113.

In his surgical work he constantly called upon God for divine guidance and assistance. On one occasion a young girl was brought to him who had a sarcomatous tumor projecting from her right temple and extending down to the cheek as low as her mouth, sadly disfiguring her face. Diagnosis revealed that an operation was imperative. Though he felt he must operate, the reputation of the hospital was not yet established, and the death of the child might prove disastrous. Other surgeons who viewed the case felt it to be very serious, but Parker committed the girl to the great Physician and successfully removed the tumor. Words that he spoke on another occasion are appropriate to this one: "The Lord has been pleased to bless another case of surgery, and add another testimony of his mercy to the labors of the hospital."<sup>1</sup>

The life of Peter Parker is a lucid picture of one who was motivated by his desire to serve the living God with whom he had constant fellowship. His desire found expression in presenting the gospel to those in China who had never heard it.

#### C. Contributing Factors to Peter Parker's Missionary Accomplishments

##### 1. Introduction.

We live in a "cause and effect" conscious age. The scientific attitude has been partially ingrained into our society. When we see an effect of any significance our minds naturally seek the cause. This search for causes reaches beyond the world of atoms and molecules to

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1. Ibid., p. 246.

the lives and accomplishments of those about us and to those who lived in the past. To what cause can one attribute their accomplishments?

It is not the purpose of the writer to place Peter Parker in a test tube to discover exactly what led to his missionary accomplishments. This study will very likely leave unmentioned many factors that exerted some influence on his accomplishments (and thus would have to be considered in a purely scientific approach); it is the great, influential factors in Parker's life and accomplishments that will be considered. By considering these, the essentials will not be hidden by the non-essentials.

## 2. His Sacrificial and Courageous Spirit.

Sacrifice and courage go hand in hand. To sacrifice demands courage and to be courageous is to sacrifice. By sacrifice is meant the renunciation and self-denial of personal desires that one may attain a greater goal. It is the subordination of self to a higher ideal. This willingness to sacrifice accounts for much that Parker was and did.

His willingness to sacrifice was seen in his youth. As a boy Parker had much ambition. He wanted to get an education and train his faculties to the full. In the way of his education stood his responsibility to support his parents. It was a trial for him to give up the idea of college and stay at home. But he did that which he felt to be right. Later he was enabled to gain the best education possible in his time.

His period of educational training entailed many further sacrifices. Having little money, many physical and material wants went

unsatisfied. He lived a simple life to gain his coveted training. Many personal, intellectual and social interests were given up that he might concentrate on those educational pursuits which would contribute to his missionary work.

Words which Parker wrote during the time of his theological and medical studies give insight into the completeness of his willingness to sacrifice for his great goal. The words reveal that his sacrificial spirit was not one of an ascetic who would sacrifice for the sake of sacrifice; rather in his sacrifice there was meaning and purpose:

I have been very happy today in the humble consciousness that if personal enjoyments, however innocent in others, should come in competition with the greater glory of God, I would in a moment sacrifice the former instead of the latter; that is, if I can be more useful in the cause of Christ in heathen lands, by foregoing the enjoyments of the conjugal relation, I am even ready to sacrifice these. Having taken it for granted that this would be the case, I have even hitherto turned away my mind from that subject as not concerning me. The views of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions being different upon this subject, it has become a matter of deep solicitude and prayer to God that I, on the one hand, may not take any step that will diminish my usefulness as a missionary of the Cross; and on the other, that I may not refuse to take any measure which, while it increases my happiness, shall greatly augment my influence upon a dying heathen world.<sup>1</sup>

His greatest sacrifices were made in his mission work. The practice of medicine in China was far different from that in the United States where existed an abundance of surgical instruments, drugs, help and sanitary conditions. Few react to an unsanitary environment as does a doctor. Few sympathize with the physical ailments of others as does the Christian doctor, or realize what certain unobtainable instruments or drugs could do to bring healing and comfort. Parker suffered

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1. Ibid., pp. 64,65.

from the very nature of his skill and the environment in which he had to work.

He worked far beyond his physical endurance. On some days he performed as many as eight major surgical operations in addition to prescribing for a hundred or more clinical patients. He exerted himself even when in a weakened condition. On one occasion, when recovering from a physical ailment, he said, "I am still so weak that I have repeatedly been in fear of fainting or falling exhausted before leaving the hospital at night."<sup>1</sup>

The sacrifices which are so often known to missionaries in their family life were experienced by Parker. Soon after his marriage to Miss Harriet Webster, the demands of his work called him away from her for a period of time. After the birth of his son, further hardships were encountered in forced separations from his family.

Parker made all these many sacrifices with a courageous and triumphant spirit, grateful for the mercies of God. He never regretted the pains which he had endured for the sake of the gospel. This spirit of sacrifice and courage made possible the completion of his many endeavors.

### 3. His Adjustment to the Customs and Needs of the People.

Those who have had experience in working with people recognize that human relations present most interesting but also difficult problems and experiences. All races are different. Yet they are composed of

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1. Ibid., p. 129.



individuals. The work of the missionary cannot be faced as that of a machinist replacing a worn piece on a machine. Human beings are not turned out on an assembly line. The work of the missionary is to present a vital message and a living Person to human personalities. It is the task of the missionary to meet people where they are and there make known to them the living Christ. Parker made a conscious effort to understand the needs and customs of the Chinese people that he might more effectively present the gospel to individual personalities.

The type of hospital that Parker set up in Canton, China, illustrates his awareness of the needs of the people among whom he was ministering. As any doctor, Parker had particular medical interests. It, however, was not on the basis of his interests that the hospital was set up, but rather to meet the needs of the people. A survey of the physical condition of the people in Canton revealed a large number of eye diseases. To meet this need of the people, he established his Ophthalmic Hospital in Canton.

One of the more spectacular of Parker's undertakings was that of being a full Ambassador of the United States to China.<sup>1</sup> In light of his religious experience and his passion for the spiritual welfare of the heathen, one might wonder why he entered the diplomatic service of the United States. The explanation is found in his awareness of the fundamental needs of the Chinese people. It was difficult for Parker to give up his active medical missionary endeavors. China at this time faced a crucial point in her history. Large elements within

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1. Franklin, op. cit., pp. 163,165.

China were opposed to all relationships with foreigners. Struggles and open conflict made China a diplomatic powder keg. Not only were the foreign trading interests in danger of being expelled from China, but white missionaries, looked upon as any other foreigners, were faced with having to give up their spiritual ministry. In the light of this situation and because he desired the greater good of the Chinese people, Peter Parker entered the diplomatic service at the special request of the President and the Secretary of State of the United States. Parker's efforts contributed much in establishing free intercourse between China and the outside world.

Parker not only had his finger on the pulse of the needs of the people of China, but he was also aware of their customs and culture. He recognized and respected the uniqueness of their culture. When Mrs. Parker went to China with her husband, she was one of the first white women to enter Canton. At the time of her arrival there were strained relations between the Chinese and the foreigners. Chinese officials who desired peace with the foreigners were afraid that if Mrs. Parker walked abroad she might be insulted by some of the common people leading to friction between the Chinese and the foreigners. Therefore, they requested Mrs. Parker to stay at home. This desire was respected by Mr. and Mrs. Parker.<sup>1</sup> They sought to please the native people in every way possible that did not involve a moral compromise.

The religious and social customs of the people were particularly studied by Parker. This information enabled him to avoid offending

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1. Stevens, op. cit., pp. 231-233.

the people. It also enabled him to present the gospel in a way they could understand.

#### 4. His Growth in His Work.

An obvious characteristic of children is growth. If the child does not grow, he is considered abnormal. Not as obvious but none the less real is the need for growth in the lives of men who have accomplished anything worthwhile. Problems in life call forth skills and abilities which may be latent or undeveloped. If there is no growth in the necessary areas, the problem will remain unsolved and nothing will be accomplished.

Growth is clearly revealed in the life of Peter Parker. Spiritually, he was continually striving toward a mark that was set before him. As a student at Amherst College he began his lifelong habit of self-examination. This examination took the form of conversations with himself. He would write down questions directed to himself and then write out the answer. By so doing he was enabled to see himself objectively and make concrete steps forward in his spiritual life.<sup>1</sup>

Parker was continually aware of his own limitations and sought to grow unto spiritual maturity. This was particularly true in his second term of missionary service in China. In spite of many years of service to the spiritual welfare of others, he writes on New Year's Eve of 1841:

Prostrate in the dark I have commenced this new year in confession of sins for the past and fervent prayer for the future. God helping me, I resolve upon more spiritual-mindedness and

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1. Ibid., p. 24.

deadness to the world.<sup>1</sup>

On this same period of service, but at a later time, he records:

Whilst nothing but complacency and delight are experienced in retracing all that God has done, mortification and penitence fill my mind as it is directed inward upon itself. My callous feelings, my formal devotions, my icy heart, and worldly-mindedness fill me with pain and chagrin before my Maker, and I now most solemnly record my conviction, that all the ills I experience flow from one source--the neglect of fasting and prayer.<sup>2</sup>

Growth implies progress; and progress implies improvement. Parker discerned where improvement was needed, and consciously sought to make it.

Earlier mention was made of how Parker sought to learn the language of the people among whom he worked. This effort to grow mentally characterized his life from his school days until the end of his life. He took lecture classes at the University of Pennsylvania to keep abreast of medical science while in the United States on furlough. In the spiritual, mental, and social realms of life, Parker was constantly growing.

#### 5. The Contribution of His Medical Skill to His Missionary Work in China.

The well-known China Wall was a symbol in Parker's day of the attitude of the Chinese to foreigners. A great barrier was raised between China and the outside world.<sup>3</sup> A medical missionary played an important part in breaking down this wall and his medical skill was responsible for this achievement. Through his medical work he won the

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1. Ibid., p. 225.

2. Ibid., p. 239.

3. Franklin, op. cit., pp. 145,146.

confidence and respect of the Chinese. This paved the way for his successful diplomatic endeavors.

His medical work was much more closely related to his missionary accomplishments than to his diplomatic achievements. Parker went out equipped to carry out Christ's commission to teach, preach and heal.

Peter Parker's great life work began with the opening of the Ophthalmic Hospital in Canton, on November 4, 1835.<sup>1</sup> The work was first looked upon with suspicion by the local authorities. But when thousands of the Chinese citizens were helped at the hospital, these suspicions soon vanished. This work proved to be a vital asset.

In the first three months of the hospital's existence it had accomplished more toward breaking down the wall of prejudice and that long cherished desire for isolation for which China has ever been noted than had been brought about by years of ordinary missionary toil, and how much this meant can only be realized by a careful study of the conditions which then obtained.<sup>2</sup>

The medical work carried on by Parker was extensive. Patients came from every one of the eighteen provinces of China. Persons treated ranged from beggars to the highest officials of the Imperial government. In one year over three thousand patients were treated.<sup>3</sup>

For Peter Parker medical work was not an end in itself; it was rather a means for gaining the greater glory of God and the evangelization of the heathen.<sup>4</sup> He always kept his medical practice in its right relation to his mission work.

A few of the contributions of his medical work and religious

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1. Stevens, op. cit., p. 118.
2. Ibid., p. 132.
3. Franklin, op. cit., pp. 146, 162.
4. Stevens, op. cit., p. 263.

endeavors can be mentioned here. The medical work provided many opportunities for the preaching of the gospel. Parker's work was done in a place that was not only antagonistic to the gospel, but hostile to the presence of foreigners as well. In this trying situation he won the confidence of the people and turned hundreds to a new Lord--Jesus Christ. Parker was a voice for God and a life for God. The people of China had an opportunity to see the great love of God in a human form. Parker's life and works presented this opportunity.

The physical benefits of the medical missionary's ministry were obvious. Thousands of disease-racked bodies found new life. Epidemics were stayed. Hideous and life-sapping tumors were removed. Sight was given to the blind. All of this was done in the name of Jesus Christ and for the purpose of giving glory to Him.

There are by-products of such a ministry which become of major importance for some of the people helped. One of the chains of many ancient civilizations is superstition. A charm may be looked upon as having supernatural significance. There is no intelligent concept of cause and effect relations. Parker helped the people to gain an intelligent view of life and released them from the shackles of superstition by revealing the error of their concepts through the light of proper medical techniques. Social and economic values also accrued from his ministry. A solidarity was given to many families under the headship of Jesus Christ. The healing of one who supported a family meant economic security for that group. The individual personality became a matter of worth. And finally, Parker's influence counted much toward the opening of China to intercourse with the rest of the world and the

resulting unhindered opportunity for evangelistic work by foreign missionaries.

#### D. Summary

The life of Peter Parker presents a perplexing problem that demands solution. Why should a man with his ability and skill sacrifice the comforts and pleasures of a profitable medical practice in the United States to work among the heathen in a foreign country? The answer to this question is found in an analysis of his religious experience. A manifest antagonism to religion was apparent in Parker's early life. In his middle teens he had a life-changing conversion. From that time his passion in life became to serve God. His college education was received at Amherst and Yale. It was at Yale College that he gained the conviction that he could best serve God on the mission field. Medical training was then taken to better equip him for his work. His missionary work in China was according to Christ's command to teach, to preach and to heal. Throughout his ministry can be seen his intense passion to serve his God sustained by his personal fellowship with the Source of his strength and life.

Parker's service for God resulted in many accomplishments for the Kingdom of God. The explanation of these accomplishments is seen in several basic factors in his character and activities. The first contributing factor was his dynamic relation to God. In addition was a sacrificial and courageous spirit that enabled him to triumph under difficult circumstances. He counted not his life as his own, but was completely dedicated to his mission. In his actual work he adjusted to

the customs and needs of the people. He started from where they were and led them to the Saviour. Characteristic of his life was a constant growth. He was never satisfied with his attainments, but was striving for improvement. His medical skill, too, was a major factor in his accomplishments in the service of God. Peter Parker was a man motivated by a great desire to serve his God and was able to give successful expression to this desire because of skills and a character which were in harmony with his purpose.



CHAPTER II

THE MOTIVATION AND CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO THE MISSIONARY  
ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF ALBERT SCHWEITZER

## CHAPTER II

### THE MOTIVATION AND CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO THE MISSIONARY ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF ALBERT SCHWEITZER

#### A. Introduction

Albert Schweitzer is the best known medical missionary in modern times. His concept of the purpose of medical missions differs markedly from most of those who have been in this work. Since Schweitzer is so distinctly an individual in his approach to the work of medical missions, it is of peculiar interest to gain an understanding of what motivated him in his work, and what were the significant factors in his missionary accomplishments.

#### B. The Primary Motivation in the Life of Albert Schweitzer

##### 1. Reverence for Life as a Factor in His Motivation

###### a. Schweitzer's Sympathetic Disposition

It has been said of St. Francis of Assisi that the birds and animals looked upon him with love and thanksgiving.<sup>1</sup> If this were true of any man today, it would be true of Albert Schweitzer.

Schweitzer's earliest recollections are of deep feeling for the suffering of the creatures about him. He was saddened by the great misery he saw in the world. Recalling a limping horse tugged and beaten by two men who were taking it to the knacker's yard, he

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1. Philip Schaff, History of the Christian Church, Vol. V, p. 402.

says, "It haunted me for weeks."<sup>1</sup>

When Schweitzer was seven or eight years old, he and Henry Brasch, a young companion, made slingshots with strips of india rubber. With these they planned an adventurous day of shooting young birds. The idea of shooting the birds originated with Henry Brasch. The thought was repulsive to Schweitzer, but for fear of being laughed at he said nothing. The birds were singing beautifully that morning and expressed no fear of the boys. Stooping like a Red Indian hunter, his companion took aim. At that moment the church bells began to ring, blending their music with the voices of the birds. Schweitzer looked upon the church bells as a voice from heaven. He immediately shoed the birds away from their impending danger, and then fled home. His flight was a combination of conviction and fear. From that time he sought to free himself from fear of the disapproval of others that he might not be hindered in doing what he felt to be right.<sup>2</sup>

Schweitzer's great sympathy for suffering creatures prevented him from participating in certain activities which his companions enjoyed. Only twice was he influenced by his friends to go fishing. Of fishing he said, "...this sport was soon made impossible for me by the treatment of worms that were put on the hook for bait, and the wrenching of the mouths of the fishes that were caught."<sup>3</sup> Zoos were not a source of pleasure for Schweitzer. He could not tolerate public amusements which depended upon the ill-treatment of animals.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Albert Schweitzer, *Memoirs of Childhood and Youth*, p. 40.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 40,41.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 43,44.
4. Albert Schweitzer, *Out of My Life and Thought*, p. 234.

Schweitzer enjoyed the pleasure of sitting behind a trotting horse and exerting his authority over a pet dog. Many of these activities he had to give up when he considered the question, What was the end of the pleasure? On one occasion he experienced the thrill of whipping an old horse into a trot. Remorse followed the thrill. Meditating on his treatment of the horse, he thought, "What good was it to me to look into his tired eyes and silently ask him to forgive me?"<sup>1</sup>

The deep concern which Schweitzer had for the well-being of all living creatures found expression in his religious life. After his mother had prayed with him and kissed him good-night, he used to add silently, "O, heavenly Father, protect and bless all things that have breath; guard them from all evil, and let them sleep in peace."<sup>2</sup>

It should be noted that the great sympathy which characterized Schweitzer when a boy was not indicative of a weak personality. Many times he stood alone among his companions for what he felt was morally right. Though he was sensitive to the opinions of others, he defied social pressure when it involved the infliction of suffering on a living creature.

Schweitzer's concern about the pain and welfare of all living creatures continues as a fundamental note throughout his life. When a doctor in Africa, he prevented an aide from inflicting harm on a stream of ants that were found on one of the hospital streets. Insects found in post holes were removed before the post was put in place. He took the responsibility of caring for stray monkeys which were found

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1. Schweitzer, *Memoirs*, p. 43.
2. Ibid., p. 40.

near the hospital. If the mother of an infant monkey had been killed, he gave out the infant to another monkey for adoption. He never permitted an adoption unless he was convinced of the adequacy of the prospective parent monkey.<sup>1</sup> In these acts Schweitzer's sympathetic disposition found its expression.

As would be expected, this great sympathy was intensified when directed toward human beings. A Jew called Mausche on occasion traveled with his donkey-cart through Schweitzer's boyhood village. Mausche was held in contempt by all the village boys. They would mimic and ridicule him. The lad, Albert, wanted to announce to the world that he was beginning to grow up; so he went with the boys after the Jew shouting, "Mausche, Mausche!" Schweitzer later repented of this act and went out of his way to shake hands and walk along beside him. He desired thrills and excitement as other boys; however, when he permitted himself to inflict suffering on another creature for a personal thrill, repentance soon followed.

It is in the Jungle Doctor that one sees most clearly his deep concern for the pain and suffering of his fellow men. Of a native afflicted with strangulated hernia he writes, "That I can save him from days of torture, that is what I feel as my great and ever new privilege. Pain is a more terrible lord of mankind than even death himself."<sup>2</sup>

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1. Lester Seymour Furr, *The Philosophy of Dr. Albert Schweitzer and its Exemplification in His Life*, p. 131. (Quoted from: Albert Schweitzer, "The Ethics of Reverence for Life", *Christendom*, Vol. I, No. 2, Winter, 1936, p. 234.)
2. Albert Schweitzer, *On the Edge of the Primeval Forest*, p. 92.

Schweitzer is usually pictured as a man of great strength and energy. This is true, yet it almost appears to be contradicted in his work as a doctor. Much of his strength and nervous energy was wasted by his uncontrollably sympathetic disposition. He classifies himself as one of those doctors who is

. . .consumed with unceasing anxiety about the condition of their severe cases and of those on whom they have operated. In vain have I tried to train myself to that equanimity which makes it possible for a doctor, in spite of all his sympathy with the sufferings of his patients, to husband, as is desirable, his spiritual and nervous energy.<sup>1</sup>

As would be expected, his sympathetic disposition had a profound influence on his thoughts about life. Thinking back over his life, Schweitzer speaks of the first great experience of his life. This, he says, followed him from childhood on. Defining this experience he said, "I mean my deep sympathy with the pain which prevails in the world around us."<sup>2</sup> Four and one-half years in the African jungle only caused Schweitzer to think more sympathetically of pain in the world. In summing up some of his thoughts after his first term in Africa, he wrote of

The Fellowship of those who bear the Mark of Pain. Who are the members of this Fellowship? Those who have learnt by experience what physical pain and bodily anguish mean, belong together all the world over; they are united by a secret bond. One and all they know the horrors of suffering to which man can be exposed, and one and all they know the longing to be free from pain.<sup>3</sup>

In this same context, he wrote of those two enemies--pain and anguish--from which we must help to deliver others.

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1. Schweitzer, *My Life and Thought*, p. 141.
2. Schweitzer, *Memoirs*, pp. 81,82.
3. Schweitzer, *Primeval Forest*, p. 173.

In the epilogue to his autobiography is further evidence of the great effect which the existence of pain in the world made on his life:

Only at quite rare moments have I felt really glad to be alive. I could not but feel with a sympathy full of regret all the pain that I saw around me, not only that of men but that of the whole creation. From this community of suffering I have never tried to withdraw myself. It seemed to me a matter of course that we should all take our share of the burden of pain which lies upon the world.<sup>1</sup>

Thus in light of what Schweitzer did and said, one comes to the conclusion that the primary motivating factor in his life was his deep sympathy for the pain and anguish which he saw in the world about him. A search for the reason why he did what he did will most often be found in Schweitzer's desire to alleviate suffering.

b. Schweitzer's Independent and Critical Thinking

There are persons with sympathetic natures, but whose nature never finds expression for their sympathy as did Schweitzer's. In addition to feeling deeply, Schweitzer thought profoundly. His life and actions are better understood in the light of his great intellectual powers.

He was a man with a great capacity and love of learning. He stands alone in the world as one who has attained a Doctor of Philosophy, a Doctor of Theology, a Doctor of Music, and a Doctor of Medicine. His first doctorate was earned by his treatise on the religious philosophy of Kant which was published when Schweitzer was twenty-four years old. At the age of twenty-six, he received his second

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1. Schweitzer, My Life and Thought, p. 240.

doctorate with his treatises on the Synoptic Gospels. When thirty he received his third doctorate earned by his monumental work on the music of Bach.<sup>1</sup> He has published books which indicate his understanding of the major religions and philosophies of the world.

Of his love of reading Schweitzer says:

And this passion for reading was unlimited. I have it still, and once I have begun a book I can never put it down; I would rather sit up all night over it. I must at least skim through it, and, if it pleases me, I read it through two or three times on end.<sup>2</sup>

Even under the trying situation of a French prison camp during the first World War, his love for learning manifested itself.

Of this experience he said:

To improve one's education one needed no books in the camp. For everything he could want to learn there were men with specialized knowledge at his disposal, and of this unique opportunity for learning I made liberal use. About banking, architecture, factory building and equipment, cereal growing, furnace building, and many other things I picked up information which I should probably never have acquired elsewhere.<sup>3</sup>

Coupled with this extraordinary capacity and love of learning was a philosophical turn of mind. His interest in philosophy can be seen in his treatise for his first doctorate which dealt with the religious philosophy of Kant. Beyond this interest in philosophy as a body of knowledge, his mind had the philosophical direction of wanting to see all of experience in a coherent relationship. He often spoke of elemental thinking--thinking which goes back to essential and basic concepts. Also important in understanding Schweitzer's mind is the

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1. George Seaver, Albert Schweitzer: Christian Revolutionary, p. 7.
2. Schweitzer, Memoirs, pp. 47,48.
3. Schweitzer, My Life and Thought, p. 171.



realization of the confidence which he had in the logical processes of thought. He says, ". . .I acknowledge myself to be one who places all his confidence in rational thinking."<sup>1</sup> "Our generation must trust itself to a new rationalism, deeper and more efficient than the old, and in that seek its salvation."<sup>2</sup>

A fruitful and philosophical mind together with his sympathetic disposition makes it natural that he should be preoccupied with what his biographer George Seaver calls the one question uppermost in his mind: "Wherein consists the worthwhileness of life?"<sup>3</sup> Schweitzer's quest in life was to discover the meaning, worth, and purpose of life.

Before considering the results of his quest, there are two other characteristics of his mind which must be understood if one is to understand why he thought as he did and the influence of this thinking on the motivation of his life. Schweitzer's thought was both critical and independent. When a boy of eight, he was granted a request for a New Testament by his father. This he read eagerly. When he read the story of the Three Wise Men from the East, the eight year old boy asked himself these questions:

What did the parents of Jesus do with the gold and other valuables which they got from these men? How could they have been poor after that? And that the Wise Men should never have troubled themselves again about the Child Jesus was to me incomprehensible. The absence, too, of any record of the shepherds of Bethlehem becoming disciples, gave me a severe shock.<sup>4</sup>

Most children of his age would have been satisfied with the reading of

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1. Ibid., p. 222.
2. Ibid.
3. Seaver, Christian Revolutionary, p. 20.
4. Schweitzer, Memoirs, pp. 23,24.

the stories. Schweitzer's thinking went much deeper. He accepted no authority which could not be substantiated at his bar of reasoning.

This critical attitude is further seen in an incident which occurred in his first year of school. His father had told him the story of Noah and the Flood. It had been raining a great deal at that time. The boy surprised his father with the question of why they were not experiencing a flood, since it had been raining for about forty days and nights. The father answered by saying that in the time of the Flood the rain was like pouring water out of buckets of water. Schweitzer's first-year school teacher gave the story of the flood in class. In the midst of the story, he interrupted the teaching, saying that she was telling it wrong; since she did not make clear the difference between the rain at the time of the Flood and the rain in our age.<sup>1</sup>

His critical thought was extended to his scientific school books. Of these he said, "For the scientific school-books I felt a positive hatred. Their confident explanations--carefully shaped and trimmed with a view to being learnt by heart. . .satisfied me in no respect."<sup>2</sup> Schweitzer cannot be explained as merely a product of his environment, for in many respects he reacted critically to the current opinion of his day.

It is in his independent thinking that one more fully realizes that he was not chained to his environment. He lived in the time and in the country where higher criticism of the Bible was in vogue. Jesus' Messianic consciousness was being denied by men such as William Wrede.

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1. Ibid., p. 23.
2. Ibid., p. 71.

Most of the scholars in Germany were rejecting the Gospels of Mark and Matthew as non-historical presentations of the life of Jesus.

In the midst of this Schweitzer wrote "The Quest of the Historical Jesus." Of the effect of his thesis on the prevailing thought he says:

It puts an end to all need to doubt the credibility of the Gospels of Mark and Matthew. It shows that their reports of the public activity and the death of Jesus follow a faithful tradition which is reliable even in details.<sup>1</sup>

Schweitzer's thinking was independent of both liberal and orthodox religious thought. He tells of speaking often with Hermann Grimm who sought to change Schweitzer's view that the Fourth Gospel was irreconcilable with the first three.<sup>2</sup> Just as his missionary activity was an independent enterprise, so his whole thought life was independent of the authority of others; his own mind was the final judge of what he believed to be true.

c. Schweitzer's Reverence for Life

In this study, Schweitzer has been seen as a man of great sympathy with the pain and anguish of all living creatures; and also as one with a keen, philosophical and independent mind. One of his mind and high evaluation of truth would be motivated by principle. He would not be one to act on impulse, but rather on a well-thought-out concept of the right. This principle, on the other hand, would have to be in harmony with his sympathetic disposition. The combination of Schweitzer's deep sympathy and fruitful mind resulted in his philosophy called "Reverence for Life."

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1. Seaver, The Man and His Mind, p. 169. (Quoted from Schweitzer, My Life and Thought).
2. Schweitzer, My Life and Thought, p. 22.

At the end of the last century man, making a retrospective view of his progress in every area of life, was very optimistic. One of the few who looked skeptically at this optimism was Schweitzer. He said that there was

. . .an optimism which to me was incomprehensible. . .My own impression was that in our mental and spiritual life we were not only below the level of the past generations, but were in many respects only living on their achievements. . .and that not a little of this heritage was beginning to melt away in our hands.<sup>1</sup>

He intended to write a book to present his ideas of the decay of civilization which his friends called pessimistic. Before the book could be written, the world was plunged into the first World War. The book was not written because the War made more graphic the condition of the world than a book of his could have done. Out of his insight into the decay of civilization came a desire to develop something constructive which would enable civilization to right itself. The problem that confronted him was to find "the attitude toward life in which the will to general progress and to ethical progress are alike found and in which they are bound together."<sup>2</sup> Though there had been progress in a general and material sphere, there had been a decline in the ethical which resulted in the decay of civilization. Nowhere in his study of the philosophies and ethics of the world could he discover the principle which should govern civilizations in their attitude toward life.

In September, 1915, he made the discovery. He was summoned

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1. Ibid., p. 147.
2. Ibid., pp. 149, 150.

to an African village about one hundred and sixty miles upstream to treat the ailing wife of a missionary. The only means of conveyance was a small steamer. On the deck of the slow steamer he filled page after page with thoughts seeking to find "the elementary and universal conception of the ethical which I had not discovered in any philosophy."<sup>1</sup>

He records the discovery thus:

Late on the third day, at the very moment when, at sunset, we were making our way through a herd of hippopotamuses, there flashed upon my mind, unforeseen and unsought, the phrase, 'Reverence for Life.' The iron door had yielded; the path in the thicket had become visible.<sup>2</sup>

Schweitzer's reverence for life has its basis in the will-to-live. This will-to-live is the most immediate fact of man's consciousness. The essential nature of the will-to-live is its determination to live to the full, to realize itself in its highest perfection. In the tree, the flower, the crystal, as well as in animals and man there is the striving to reach the perfection with which each is endowed. The striving for perfection involves both spiritual and material aspects of life, thus providing a basis for an universal ethic.<sup>3</sup>

Before noting the relation of the will-to-live and reverence for life, it would be well to understand why Schweitzer started with the will-to-live as the basis of his ethical thought. He examined the ethical systems of the world and felt that they were all inadequate in their presentation of the basis of the ethical. This was true because the ethical systems started outside of man. Since the will-to-live is

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1. Ibid., p. 156.

2. Ibid.

3. Seaver, Christian Revolutionary, p. 77.

the thing which man in his consciousness is most certain of, and since it is consistent with his very nature, Schweitzer felt that it was the place to start. Further of the will-to-live, he says:

The knowledge which I derive from my will-to-live is rich and more nutritive than that which I gain by consideration of the objective world. . . What is clear and certain is that we ought to let the ideas which lie before us in the will-to-live, rank and take effect as the higher knowledge from which alone productive action flows.<sup>1</sup>

He says, too, that we do not know how we gained this will-to-live, but we know that its presence is a fact. Since it is an intrinsic part of man's being, he is under obligation to live in harmony with it.

From the fact of the will-to-live, Schweitzer develops his ethics which in essence is:

It is good to maintain life and further life; it is bad to damage and destroy life, however much it struggles against it, ethics arrives at the religion of Jesus. It must recognize that it can find no other relationship to other beings as full of sense as the relationship of love. Ethics is maintaining of life at the highest point of development--my own life and other life--by devoting myself to it in help and love, and both these things are connected. And this ethic, profound, universal, has the significance of religion--it is religion.<sup>2</sup>

That, in essence, is reverence for life. One desires for all life what is implicit in his own will-to-live. One desires for all life the perfection with which it is endowed, whether this life be that of an insect in a pool or of a man, for all life is one.<sup>3</sup>

That day on the small steamer when Schweitzer made his discovery of reverence for life was not a conversion experience in the

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1. Furr, op. cit., p. 125. (from Schweitzer, Civilization and Ethics, p. 221.)
2. Furr, op. cit., p. 127. (from Albert Schweitzer, "Religion in Modern Civilization", The Christian Century, Vol. 51, No. 48, Nov. 28, 1934, p. 1483.)
3. Ibid., p. 129. (from Schweitzer, Civilization and Ethics, p. 257).

life of Schweitzer. His life and actions after that time were of the same nature as before. Reverence for life merely made explicit what was controlling his life before. When he was saddened at the sight of two men tugging a limping horse to the knacker's yard, when he shoed the birds beyond the range of Henry Brasch's slingshot, when he forbade a hospital attendant to harm ants on one of the hospital streets, when he went to Africa to relieve the pain and anguish of the natives, these were but illustrations of Schweitzer's own reverence for life. It was the primary motivating force throughout his life. His "discovery" of reverence for life was the finding of the philosophical explanation and justification of what was implicit in his actions before.

Schweitzer had a sympathetic disposition and a mind that enabled him to live in harmony with that disposition. His sympathy was the basic moving factor in his life, but his mind gave direction to that sympathy; the combination being reverence for life. His aim in life was to relieve the pain and anguish about him, and, further, to assist all life in its goal of perfection.

One difficulty in the philosophy of reverence for life lies in the necessity of one life to slay another life in order for the former to live. Man must take the life of vegetation and animals in order to live. This obvious fact is recognized by Schweitzer. Rather than arguing against reverence for life, the necessity laid upon man to take other life, says Schweitzer, should only serve to put man under a greater obligation for reverence of that life which is not necessary to be taken. Man is indebted to reverence life because he finds it

necessary to take life. Thus, to the factor of man's will-to-live finding full expression in reverence for life, must be added man's debt to reverence life because of other life which he must take of necessity.

A third factor which Schweitzer feels should cause man to reverence life is the debt of mankind to pay for the evil done by some men. In Africa he saw much pain and anguish among the natives which resulted from their exploitation by the white men. Because some men caused pain, he felt that as a man he was under obligation to atone for the evil of these men by his reverence for life.<sup>1</sup>

Schweitzer, then, justified his reverence for life with three primary reasons: First, and most important, was the existence of the will-to-live and the striving for perfection which that implied; second was the debt laid upon man for taking other life of necessity; third was the debt laid on society to atone for the evil done by individual men. He applied reverence for life to all life situations, and was directed by what reverence for life dictated. His ultimate motivation was reverence for life which grew out of his basic sympathy and understanding.

## 2. Gratitude as a Factor in His Motivation

Earlier in this study was mentioned what Schweitzer called his first great experience in life, namely, his deep sympathy with the pain which is prevalent in the world. In the same context he mentions

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1. Schweitzer, Primeval Forest, pp. 171, 172.



his second great experience of life which was the question about the right to happiness.<sup>1</sup> He recognized his advantages of good health, good friends, congenial work, the background of a happy home, freedom to express his thoughts and feelings. With this realization came the questions, "What have I done to deserve this?"--and the answer to his question, "To whom much is given of him shall much be required."<sup>2</sup>

Gratitude became the second motivating force in the life of Albert Schweitzer. He writes of man's obligation to respond to blessings in life:

You are happy; therefore, you are called on to give up much. Whatever you have received more than others; in health, in ability, in success, in a pleasant childhood, in harmonious conditions of home life, all this you must not take to yourself as a matter of course. You must pay a price for it. You must render in return an unusually great sacrifice of your life for the sake of other life.<sup>3</sup>

Gratitude for the blessings which came to him is seen throughout his life. After he and his wife were released from a prisoner of war camp, during the first World War, they were at a railway station with much baggage but were too weak to carry it. A poor cripple who had no baggage of his own offered to help Schweitzer. In gratitude for this assistance in a time of need, he vowed that in memory of the poor cripple he would always in the future keep a lookout at stations for heavily laden people, and help them.<sup>4</sup> Even the extensive creative work which he did was done out of a sense of gratitude for the goodness of destiny in permitting him to be a free personality,

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1. Schweitzer, *Memoirs*, p. 81.
2. Seaver, *The Man and His Mind*, p. 26.
3. Furr, *op. cit.*, p. 109. (from "Schweitzer's Ethics", *The Hibbert Journal*, Vol. 23, No. 4, July 1925, p. 701).
4. Schweitzer, *My Life and Thought*, p. 176.

when so many others were enslaved to the circumstances of life.

Schweitzer said, "Every task or piece of creative work which I am allowed to do is to me only a return of gratitude to destiny for that act of grace."<sup>1</sup>

Schweitzer's decision to give his life to the service of humanity grew out of gratitude for the blessing which he had received in life. It was in 1896 while in calm deliberation over the fact that he must not accept his happiness as a matter of course, but give something in return for it, that he decided ". . .that I would consider myself justified in living till I was thirty for science and art, in order to devote myself from that time forward to the direct service of humanity."<sup>2</sup> The desire to express his sense of gratitude and his reverence for life thus united in direct service to humanity. Reverence for life and gratitude are the two great motivating factors in the life of Albert Schweitzer.

His decision to go to Africa as a doctor developed as a natural expression of these two factors. He first learned of the need for missionaries in Africa and then decided that he would be able to render the greatest service if he went as a doctor. As a doctor in Africa he would be able to give full expression to his reverence for life and repay his debt of gratitude.

### 3. Religion in the Life of Albert Schweitzer

It may appear peculiar that in the discussion of Schweitzer's

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1. Furr, *op. cit.*, p. 103. (from "Dr. Albert Schweitzer and Goethe", *The Hibbert Journal*, Vol. 27, No. 4, July 1929, p. 689).
2. Schweitzer, *My Life and Thought*, p. 85.

motivation for his work as a medical missionary in Africa little has been said about God and his religious beliefs. The general concept of a missionary is one who feels the call of God to convert unbelievers to the faith in God which he believes to be the true faith. When Schweitzer first went to Africa, he did not even want to preach his faith. He said, "I wanted to be a doctor that I might be able to work without having to talk."<sup>1</sup> He did not want to teach and secure acceptance of his faith; he wanted only to be an example of his faith.

In order to understand why his motivation was not related to the evangelization of the African natives, as might be expected of a missionary, some of his basic religious views will be presented.

Significant in the religious concepts of Schweitzer is his attitude toward Christian doctrine and theology. His biographer, George Seaver, states that Christian doctrine was not necessary for Schweitzer's thinking, though the Christian ethic was necessary.<sup>2</sup> His missionary endeavor depended neither on dogma nor doctrine, but "on the simple Gospel that teaches the liberation of the world through the Spirit of Jesus, as it went out to men in the Sermon on the Mount."<sup>3</sup> It mattered not to Schweitzer what the African natives believed about God, man, or immortality, as long as they exhibited the love about which Jesus spoke.

Liberty of thought was fundamental to Schweitzer's religion. He interprets Paul's "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty",

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1. Schweitzer, *My Life and Thought*, p. 94.
2. Seaver, *The Man and His Mind*, p. 43.
3. Ibid., p. 49.

as meaning complete intellectual freedom in matters of Christian doctrine. Christianity, to him, was devotion to Jesus' religion of love, rather than acquiescence to certain articles of belief.<sup>1</sup>

In the relation of faith and reason, he exalts reason above faith. He accepts no special revelation of God which cannot be justified at the bar of reason.

His view of the Bible was in harmony with his view of the relation of faith and reason. The Bible was not authoritative for him, although he did believe certain portions, such as the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, to be historical. Schweitzer's thinking started from his consciousness of the will-to-live rather than from revealed truth found in the Bible.

Immortality and eternal life were not major considerations for him. In neither of his two autobiographical works is there any indication that a belief in eternal life prompted him to action. He was interested in practicing "Jesus' religion of love" with no apparent concern about a future life. He sought to relieve the pain and anguish which the African natives experienced in the present life, but gave no consideration to the possibility of suffering in eternity.

Since his religion did not involve a concern for the eternal welfare of the African natives, nor a belief in the Bible as authoritative, upon which this concern is based, it is understandable that his motivation was not related to the evangelization of the natives.

Schweitzer would describe religion as being of the essence

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1. Schweitzer, *My Life and Thought*, p. 59.

of ethics. It is the ethics of the Sermon on the Mount that is the essence of religion.<sup>1</sup> Ethics, as Schweitzer defines it, is the maintaining of life at its highest point of development, and the devotion of oneself in a spirit of love to that end.<sup>2</sup>

C. Contributing Factors to Albert Schweitzer's Missionary Accomplishments

1. His Sacrificial and Courageous Spirit

It has been said of Schweitzer that his deeds bore fruit because they were inspired by sacrifice.<sup>3</sup> When he first went to Africa he was prepared to make three major sacrifices: to abandon the organ, to renounce the academic teaching activities, and to lose financial independence, relying upon friends for economic support. He was devoted to the organ, to teaching, and loved being independent. To give these up was like cutting away a part of himself. He said, "...Only my intimate friends knew what it cost me."<sup>4</sup> He describes further the pain which these sacrifices caused him:

Not to preach any more, not to lecture any more, was for me a great sacrifice, and till I left for Africa I avoided, as far as possible, going past either St. Nicholas' or the university, because the very sight of the places where I had carried on work which I could never resume was too painful for me.<sup>5</sup>

When he made these sacrifices, Schweitzer fully intended to forsake these activities for the remainder of his life.

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1. Schweitzer, *My Life and Thought*, p. 58.
2. Furr, *op. cit.*, p. 127. (from Albert Schweitzer, "Religion in Modern Civilization", *The Christian Century*, Vol. 51, No. 48, November 28, 1934. p. 1483).
3. Seaver, *The Man and His Mind*, p. 49.
4. Schweitzer, *My Life and Thought*, p. 196.
5. Ibid., p. 111.

Years later he was again enabled to play the organ and to lecture.

His decision to return to Africa after the first World War was as difficult to make and involved as many sacrifices as his decision to go there in the first place. The work of his first term in Africa had been interrupted and the medical work started there had collapsed through no fault of his own. His books and thought were being well received in Europe, gaining him wide popularity. Professorships in several universities were offered him. His wife's health made it impossible for her to return to the Tropics at that time. At first the French authorities would not permit his return to Lambarene, where his work in Africa had been done. Yet in spite of these difficulties, he returned to Africa.

The beginning of his work in Africa presented difficult problems which demanded great courage. There was no hospital on his arrival in Lambarene, although he had been promised a hospital building. The trade in okoume wood had lured the natives away to a more profitable business, resulting in the lack of workers for the building of a hospital. Schweitzer had to commence his medical work in the open air, under the tropical sun. When the usual evening storm came, everything had to be carried to the little porch of his bungalow. The first hospital was originally a chicken house. He fixed shelves on the walls and covered the worst of the dirt with white-wash. The roof was in such a bad state that he found it necessary to wear his sun helmet all day. In spite of these handicaps, he faithfully carried on the work.

His courage was evident when he was himself a patient. Footsores which he had contracted earlier broke out again and developed into

ulcers. Unable to walk, he insisted upon being carried to the hospital each day to carry on his medical work. Even though it meant pain for himself, he continued to serve the people.<sup>1</sup>

Some medical missionaries refuse hopeless cases, for if a patient dies the doctor's reputation is often jeopardized. To have refused to accept a patient would not have been a serious offense in the eyes of the natives. Schweitzer, however, courageously risked his reputation by treating all who were in need. It was a common practice for the natives to dump patients at night at the hospital and leave them there half dead. "The Jungle Doctor" welcomed even those to his hospital. His hospital was open to all sufferers. Even if he could not save one from death, he sought to alleviate the pain as much as possible.

Often Schweitzer's convictions ran counter to the convictions of those about him. In such a situation he would courageously maintain his ideals in spite of pressure exerted upon him. When a boy, he lived among children whose standard of living was on a lower plain than that of his own family. One winter he was given an overcoat. The boys in his village could not afford such a garment, so he felt it unjust to wear one himself. When Sunday came, he refused to wear it. The boxing he received on his ears from his father availed nothing. Albert stood firm. Many a time after that he received the stick for his sense of justice with respect to the overcoat.<sup>2</sup>

His decision to go to Africa as a medical missionary resulted

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1. Seaver, *The Man and His Mind*, p. 96.
2. Schweitzer, *Memoirs*, pp. 17, 18.

in many hard battles with his friends and relatives. His friends were united in declaring the folly of the enterprise. He was accused of burying the talent entrusted to him, of trading in false currency, of being like a general who wanted to go into the firing line, of being conceited, of being disappointed at the growth of his reputation in Europe, of being disappointed in love. He was advised to let others work among the savages who would not be compelled to leave gifts and acquirements in science and art unused, and instead of going himself to lecture on behalf of medical help for the natives. Schweitzer says of these verbal duels, "In general, how much I suffered through so many people assuming a right to tear open all the doors and shutters of my inner self!"<sup>1</sup> But in spite of opposition from friends and relatives, he stood firm in his decision to go as a medical missionary. He had determined on what he thought was right and was willing to stand by his decision against any opposition.

## 2. His Versatility and Humility

George Seaver begins his biography of Albert Schweitzer with these words: "Albert Schweitzer is probably the most gifted genius of our age. . ."<sup>2</sup> His genius expressed itself in many and varied fields. He earned four doctorates. These were in the fields of philosophy, theology, music and medicine. Three of them were obtained while he was in his twenties--when most men would still be striving for one. In each of these fields he made an outstanding contribution to learning. His

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1. Schweitzer, My Life and Thought, p. 90.
2. Seaver, The Man and His Mind, p. 3.



scholarship was accompanied by practical skills. He was a "surgeon, a self-taught architect and builder, an agriculturalist, an organist and a consultant in organ-craft."<sup>1</sup> In everything he did he sought perfection.

The very nature of Schweitzer's missionary endeavor demanded a man of his versatility. His work was practically an independent enterprise. Although he went to Africa under a mission board, the responsibility fell upon his shoulders to administer the work in all its details. In the construction of a new hospital, following the first World War, he had to plan and supervise the work; then during the construction he served as architect, clerk of works, foreman, transport agent, carpenter's assistant, and in any other capacity that was needed.<sup>2</sup> At the same time he assisted in the medical and surgical work and played the piano for the refreshment of the workers.

When the lack of funds became a pressing problem for the mission, more than once Schweitzer's gifts came to his rescue. At the suggestion of an Archbishop in Sweden, he gave organ recitals and lectures in that country in order to pay off his most pressing debts. A few weeks were sufficient to raise the needed funds.<sup>3</sup>

Yet, in spite of his many abilities, he was a humble man. C.T. Champion, who has translated many of Schweitzer's books, says that Schweitzer creates a sense of charm as well as of power when in his presence, for his power is "of the easy unself-conscious order, and the

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1. Ibid.
2. C. T. Champion, Albert Schweitzer, p. 7.
3. Seaver, The Man and His Mind, p. 79.

undeniable dominance has no hint of arrogance or self-assertion; it comes unsought."<sup>1</sup> The only force Schweitzer used was kindness. He loathed violence. His strength came not in self-assertion, but in self-giving.

Although Schweitzer worked independently, he realized how dependent he was upon others. He acknowledged the important influence which others had in making him what he was. Of these he said, "I stand, as it were, under the sway of these people."<sup>2</sup> He also readily acknowledged that there were people who were superior to him in many activities. His talents did not prevent him from appreciating the worth of others, nor from thinking humbly of himself. This spirit of humility enabled him to work successfully with others in the difficult situations he faced in his work.

### 3. His Growth in His Skills and Work

One need only look at the quantity and variety of work which Schweitzer turned out to realize that he was a hard worker. He was constantly striving to improve his skills and utilize them to the utmost. Of his effort, he said, "I worked much and hard, with unbroken concentration, but without hurry."<sup>3</sup>

Even as a boy, Schweitzer undertook each activity seriously and earnestly, ever improving. He played games with the same earnestness that he manifested in other activities. He disliked easy competition

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1. Campion, op. cit., p. 3.
2. Schweitzer, Memoirs, pp. 89,90.
3. Schweitzer, My Life and Thought, p. 29.

and became provoked when his opponents did not do their best. His piano playing was at first very discouraging to his teacher. In disgust his teacher said, "Really you don't deserve to have such beautiful music given you to play. You'll come and spoil this. . . just like everything else."<sup>1</sup> Schweitzer determined to show the teacher whether he could play or not. The next week he practiced arduously. He marked on the music special fingering above the notes. The teacher gained a new insight into the boy. From that time, Schweitzer constantly grew in his musical knowledge and ability. Mathematics and languages were difficult for the boy. The very fact that they were difficult challenged him to master them.<sup>2</sup>

As has been mentioned, friends and relatives sought to discourage his undertaking medical studies. It was argued that the studies would take too long. Not willing to go to Africa with less than the best preparation possible, he remarked, "Whenever I was inclined to feel that the years I should have to sacrifice were too long, I reminded myself that Hamilcar and Hannibal had prepared for their march on Rome by their slow and tedious conquest of Spain."<sup>3</sup> Schweitzer aimed at perfection in all that he did and was not content until he approximated it.

The writing of several of his books illustrates his dissatisfaction with less than the best. The lack of good publications on Bach's musical art led Schweitzer to write an essay on the subject. Before he had proceeded far in the work, it became apparent to him that an essay

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1. Schweitzer, *Memoirs*, p. 57.
2. Schweitzer, *My Life and Thought*, p. 4.
3. Ibid., p. 95.

would have to expand into a book. He felt compelled to do a thorough piece of work. Again, in his organ playing, Schweitzer was not content with less than the best. Before giving a concert on an untried organ, he would practice at least eight hours before he was satisfied that he knew the organ. He has been known to spend a week cleaning out the pipes of an old organ before he gave a concert, to insure perfect tones from the instrument.

His method of using an interpreter was unique and illustrated his perfectionist tendency. Before he spoke, he would practice the lecture with the interpreter to insure a smooth final product. It is said that his hearers often forgot that an interpreter was being used, so smooth was the performance. He used an interpreter because he felt he could convey his message better that way than by speaking badly in his hearers' tongue.

Schweitzer's trait of seeking the highest point of development in everything he undertook is seen in his work as a "Jungle Doctor." He was progressive and courageous in the improvement and expansion of the work. When only a chicken house was available for a hospital, it was made into the best possible hospital. When materials and workers were available the hospital plant was expanded as needed. When the first hospital became inadequate, an entirely new hospital layout was built in a better location. He was alert, and both he and his work were ever growing and developing.

#### 4. His Medical Skill

Schweitzer's medical work is a study of his missionary

accomplishments and the attainment of his ultimate intrinsic goals. Generally, medical missionaries conceive their medical work to be of intrinsic value in that it is a service of love. But primarily the healing ministry is looked upon as an instrumental value leading individuals to God. Schweitzer, on the other hand, went to Africa not to evangelize, but to relieve the pain and anguish of the natives.<sup>1</sup> His reverence for life found expression in saving human bodies from pain and disease. Each day in the hospital were read the standing orders of the hospital.<sup>2</sup> This was the only instruction given the natives. All such orders dealt with the administration of work for the physical well-being of the natives. Their spiritual condition was not a major concern.

That a need existed in Africa for Schweitzer's medical skill is apparent. Before he arrived there he learned of this need from others:

I had read about the physical miseries of the natives in the virgin forests; I had heard about them from missionaries, and the more I thought about it the stranger it seemed to me that we Europeans trouble ourselves so little about the great humanitarian task which offers itself to us in far-off lands.<sup>3</sup>

The sight of the natives only intensified his feelings. In his letter-diaries are found such statements as: "The need out here is terrible"; "Their pain is dreadful"; "Here among us everyone is ill"; "Our country devours its children".<sup>4</sup> Upon his arrival in Africa, he was besieged

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1. Ibid., p. 47.
2. Campion, op. cit., p. 20.
3. Schweitzer, Primeval Forest, pp. 1,2.
4. Seaver, The Man and His Mind, p. 59.

by sick people even before he had time to unpack. He treated such sickness as malaria, leprosy, sleeping sickness, dysentery, frambesia, phagedenic ulcers, pneumonia, heart disease, hernia, elephantiasis tumors, wounds from the beasts of the jungle, and injuries of men working in the lumber camps.<sup>1</sup>

To this great need, Schweitzer successfully applied his medical skill. In his first nine months he treated nearly two thousand patients. Pain was relieved and disease-riddled bodies were healed. For hundreds of miles around his hospital Africans and Europeans alike flocked to receive help. After visiting the hospital, an United States observer noted, "It has a wonderful record both for quantity and quality of work."<sup>2</sup>

Dr. Albert Schweitzer has accomplished what he set out to do--to give expression to his reverence for life by alleviating the pain and anguish of the African natives by becoming a skillful and outstanding doctor.

#### D. Summary

In this chapter the primary motivation in the life of Albert Schweitzer has been presented, as well as those factors which contributed to his missionary accomplishments.

Fundamental to the nature of Schweitzer are a deep sympathy for the pain and anguish of all living creatures and a philosophical and independent mind. These characteristics are the bases of Schweitzer's

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1. Schweitzer, *My Life and Thought*, p. 139.
2. Ibid., p. 272.

reverence for life. By "Reverence for Life" he means the maintaining of all life, whether plant, animal, or human, at its highest point of development. He was completely devoted to this end. A second basis in his motivation is his sense of gratitude. He had a strong sense of debt for the many blessings which destiny had bestowed upon him. Out of gratitude for these blessings he gave his life for the service of mankind.

Basic to his missionary accomplishments is his courageous and sacrificial spirit. He gave himself to the service of others in situations that demanded great courage. Versatility is seen as a factor in his life, not only in his diversified intellectual attainments but also in his many practical skills. With his great ability went a deep humility. Schweitzer had before him the goal of perfection in every undertaking of life, and strove to attain it. His medical skill enabled him to give expression to his reverence for life. By that means he was able to relieve the pain and anguish of the African natives and to fulfill his own sense of indebtedness to life for all its gifts.

CHAPTER III

A COMPARISON OF THE MOTIVATION AND SIGNIFICANT FACTORS  
WHICH LED TO THE MISSIONARY ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF PETER PARKER  
AND ALBERT SCHWEITZER



## CHAPTER III

### A COMPARISON OF THE MOTIVATION AND SIGNIFICANT FACTORS WHICH LED TO THE MISSIONARY ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF PETER PARKER AND ALBERT SCHWEITZER

#### A. Introduction

Peter Parker and Albert Schweitzer have been studied separately with respect to their motivation and to those factors contributing to their missionary accomplishments. It is the aim of this chapter to bring to a focal point a comparison of the two men in the above areas. In addition, this chapter will indicate how the distinctive type of motivation of each man resulted in his particular type of ministry.

#### B. A Comparison of Their Motivation

##### 1. A Comparison of the Factors Involved in Their Motivation

###### a. The Supreme Values in Their Lives

Albert Schweitzer believed that the highest goal which a man can set before himself is reverence for life. Man and civilizations must evaluate their activities and progress with reverence for life as the standard. If any activity makes a contribution to some life, whether it be plant, animal, or human, so that that life can better approximate the perfection toward which it is striving, then that activity is of great value. Schweitzer's deep sympathy for the physical pain and anguish in the world found its highest expression in the following philosophy: Pain and anguish weaken a life's desire to live and to

strive for the perfection with which it was endowed. Therefore, to reverence life means to eliminate those two enemies of life. Schweitzer's life was dedicated to that end.

Peter Parker's goal in life was to gain the greater glory of God. He believed himself to have been created and redeemed by God. So, God became his Lord, and his greatest desire became to serve his God. All of his activities were evaluated by their contribution to his service for God. In contrast to Schweitzer, who was concerned with man's physical well-being, Parker was little interested in man's physical health in comparison with his concern for man's spiritual welfare.

b. The Authority Behind Their Motivation

When two men's goals in life are so different, their ideas about the meaning and purpose of life must have developed from diametrically opposite starting points. Schweitzer had studied the philosophies of the world, and failed to find in any of them a satisfactory explanation of man's purpose in life. He concluded that one must begin within man, that is with man's immediate consciousness of his will-to-live, rather than with the philosophies of the world, if the meaning of man's existence is to be understood. Schweitzer arrived at his reverence for life through the authority he ascribed to his own rational thought processes and to the knowledge derived from the will-to-live.

In contrast to Schweitzer, Parker's authority came from without himself. He believed his rational processes and immediate consciousness to be faulty authorities, since they were distorted by

sin. He looked in dependence upon a supernatural God for the true meaning of life. The will and purpose of God he found in the Scripture. He believed the Scripture to be absolutely authoritative on his life and thought.

c. The Place of the Mystical in Their Lives

Since Schweitzer began within himself for the explanation of life, it is understandable that he gave little place to a mystical relation to the supernatural. There is one mention of prayer in his autobiographical works. When he was a boy, he had prayed for animals. He was sufficient within himself. Schweitzer did speak of the spirit of Jesus. The spirit of Jesus, however, was not so much a living personality as a standard of ethics.

Parker's life and thought had their foundation in his mystical relationship to a personal God. The Scripture was his norm in life, but his vital relation to God gave him his dynamic. In his decisions and work, he was constantly in prayer seeking the wisdom, strength, and ability of his divine Father. His own personality was often subordinated in his mystical union with God.

d. Relationship to Other Persons

For Schweitzer all life was one. He was under obligation to the life of an insect as well as to that of man. However, since existence necessitates that one life take another life that the former might live, he had a scale of value for the various types of life. Since man has the most highly developed will-to-live, he becomes the most important type of life. Animal and plant life are also fitted into this scale according to his standard. With his great emphasis

on life as such, Schweitzer tended to overlook individual personalities. He strongly desired to alleviate the pain and anguish of humanity, but he looked at individuals as physical beings rather than personalities. He had great respect for the personality of others, but his own great interest lay in the life.

Similarly, Parker looked upon people in terms of the passion of his life rather than in view of their individual personalities. Man was a soul bound by a body. He was interested in serving his God, and since that service necessitated the saving of the heathen, he was interested in those to whom he must take God's message. His love for individuals was in a sense swallowed up in his love for God.

e. Sense of Gratitude

Schweitzer quickly recognized blessings which came to him. With the blessing came a sense of debt for that good fortune. He speaks of destiny being the source of his blessings, and felt that his debt for the blessing must be paid to humanity. His sacrificial service for humanity grew out of his gratitude for the blessings destiny had bestowed on him.

On the other hand, Parker was so concerned with God's redemptive love that his gratitude was directed to God, almost to the exclusion of other people. Whereas Schweitzer readily recognized the acts of kindness which others did for him and sought to repay them in loving kindnesses, Parker was more sensitive to supernatural works of grace and his debt to God. Blessings which came through others were looked upon as blessings from God, almost forgetting the worth of the human instrumentality.

f. Attitude Toward Themselves

In spite of his many gifts, Schweitzer was a humble man. There was no arrogance or boastfulness in his attitude. But, paradoxically, he also had a sense of his own indispensableness. He built his work entirely about himself. Little was done to train others to help him carry on the work. When the work expanded, necessity was laid on him to get more helpers. However, they were looked upon as helpers rather than equals who would carry on the work if his life were taken.

Parker was also a humble man. Time and again he acknowledged before God his own unworthiness. He felt that apart from God he was nothing. But Parker, too, seemed to feel his indispensableness to his work. As a result, when he was present the work flourished, but with the lack of trained leaders to carry on, the work declined in his absence.

2. The Relation of Their Motivation to Their Distinct Types of Missionary Activity

a. Albert Schweitzer

Albert Schweitzer was a man with a deep sympathy for the physical pain and anguish of all living creatures. Philosophically, his thinking began with the will-to-live and resulted in his reverence for life, which is a synthesis of his thought and his sympathetic disposition. Since he felt that reverence for life was philosophically sound, and was in harmony with his nature, and since he had a sense of debt for the blessings which he received in life, he believed that his life should be given in the service of humanity. This was his reason

for choosing Africa, for he felt that it was there that his service was most needed.

Motivated as he was, his ministry became primarily one of alleviating the pain and anguish of those about him. He forgot himself in his effort to help other life gain the perfection with which it was endowed. Because there was so much suffering about him, the major part of his work consisted in the relieving of this suffering, rather than positively building for perfection in others. He did this because suffering weakens the will-to-live, and a strong will-to-live is the essential ingredient of life. His medical work gave full expression to his reverence for life.

b. Peter Parker

Peter Parker believed himself to be a sinner deserving the condemnation of God, but in Christ enjoying God's redemptive grace. In gratitude to God and because he felt that it would be the wisest step when viewed from eternity, he gave himself to the service of God. The personal God revealed in the Scripture was a living reality to him, and was determinative in all that he did.

Motivated as he was, his ministry became one of service to God, which involved proclaiming God's redemptive love to those under condemnation. His medical work became a tool to this end. If he had thought that he could have effectively brought the message of salvation to the heathen without his medical skill, he would never have undertaken the study of medicine. All of his energies and skill were focused on the goal of his ministry--to bring salvation to the unsaved millions of China.

C. A Comparison of Influential Factors Which Led to Their  
Missionary Accomplishments

1. Sacrificial Spirit

A study of the motivation of Schweitzer and Parker is essentially a study of contrasts, for the men differed widely in their motivation. On the other hand, there is a marked similarity between the two men in certain traits of character and practices which contributed to their missionary accomplishments.

A sacrificial spirit was a dominant characteristic of both men. They sacrificed all personal ambition to become missionaries. Though their aims were different, they completely forgot themselves in their effort to gain their goals. They were willing to sacrifice ambitions and activities which they loved intensely, if this sacrifice would contribute to gaining their missionary aims. Their sacrificial spirit was manifested in their missionary activities and in their family and personal lives. Many of their sacrifices appeared needless to those about them, but the testimony of history has verified the wisdom of their actions.

2. Courageous Endeavors

Very often Schweitzer and Parker faced impossible situations in their work: Medical supplies became very low; half-dead patients were brought to them; financial assistance was cut off; hostility arose among those to whom they were administering aid; their motivation and good intentions were questioned; they became personally ill and physically weak; they became mentally fatigued; they were separated from their

families. The temptation to give up came to them. But they were made of strong moral fiber. They refused to be defeated in their missionary endeavors. No task was too difficult and no barrier great enough to stop them. Their difficulties were made into stepping stones to greater opportunities.

### 3. Growth in Their Work

The standard which both men had before them in any activity undertaken was perfection. They readily acknowledged their imperfections, but were dissatisfied with any imperfection. They practiced and worked until they operated at maximum efficiency. Progress could continually be seen in their activities. Whether they were administering medical aid, building a hospital, playing the organ, or learning a language they did the best of which they were capable. They even sacrificed periods of rest and relaxation that they might utilize the time for the improvement of their work.

### 4. Versatility

Of the two men, Schweitzer was by far the most versatile. He had a stronger intellect and a remarkable variety of skills. Schweitzer's versatility was a needed asset in the type of work which he undertook, for his work was independent and in a primitive culture. Since he was alone, he had only himself to plan, supervise, and execute his work; his variety of gifts was essential. Parker, too, was versatile, though not to the same extent. He performed the tasks of preacher, doctor, hospital administrator, and diplomat. The China of Parker's day was more civilized and advanced than the Africa which Schweitzer faced, so



the demands made on him were not so numerous, but there was not a single one of his gifts which was not needed in his work in China.

#### 5. Adjustment to the Needs and Customs of the People

Schweitzer's goal was to alleviate the physical pain and anguish of the natives. To do this he did not feel that he had to understand the hopes, desires, aspirations, and customs of the people. He made no effort to master the language of the people with whom he worked. Parker's goal was different. His desire to alleviate suffering was entirely secondary, his primary goal being to present in an understandable fashion the gospel of Jesus Christ. This necessitated a grasp of the native language and an understanding of their culture that he might put Christian content and concepts into their language.

Both men were sensitive to the physical needs of the people among whom they ministered. They first investigated the types of diseases prevalent in their respective countries and then specialized and became outstanding in their treatment of these diseases. They also assisted the people in their economic and material needs.

#### 6. The Use of Medical Skill

Schweitzer and Parker were skilled medical men. Had they remained in their native lands, their medical reputation would have been extensive. Both men dedicated their skill to the alleviating of suffering in the midst of the people they served. They experienced the satisfaction of knowing that the vast amount of good which they did would have been left undone had they not performed it and ministered to a people uncared for by any other and in great need of their services.

Schweitzer was satisfied when his medical skill resulted in the alleviating of physical suffering. To Parker this was only a step to serve his main purpose. He utilized the confidence of the people which he gained through his medical skill to make known the love of Christ which prompted his work and to minister to their spiritual needs.

#### D. Summary

In a comparison of Albert Schweitzer and Peter Parker, one is first struck with the differences between the two men. Schweitzer's ideals were directed toward the temporal and physical welfare of humanity; whereas Parker was interested in the eternal and spiritual welfare of those among whom he ministered. Schweitzer's authority for his life and thought centered in his own rational processes and knowledge dictated by his immediate consciousness; whereas Parker surrendered the authority of his thinking to the authority of the Scripture. Schweitzer felt sufficient unto himself; whereas Parker depended upon his mystical union with Christ for the source of his power. Schweitzer was very grateful to those persons through whom he received blessings; whereas Parker's gratitude was directed more toward God, than to the instrument of the blessing. In the goals and motivation of their lives they were antithetical.

A closer examination of their lives will indicate many similarities. Both were outstanding men, and had those characteristics which are common to such persons. They had a sacrificial spirit and undertook courageous endeavors. They had perfection for their goal and

did not rest until they approximated it in all their activities. They adapted themselves and their work to the needs of the people among whom they ministered to the extent necessary to gain their missionary aims. Both were able medical men, and utilized their skill to the full on behalf of the people they served.

CHAPTER IV

GENERAL SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

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The purpose of this thesis has been to study the lives of Peter Parker and Albert Schweitzer in order to discover the motivation for their work and those significant factors which contributed to their missionary accomplishments. The study of their motivation led to the consideration of why men of their ability and skill would sacrifice the comforts and pleasures of a profitable medical practice and a preaching ministry in their home countries for work among natives in primitive lands. The study of their missionary accomplishments led to an understanding of the character traits and skills which they possessed which contributed to their achievements. These two men were selected for this study because the concept of missions which each had was so different from the other. This made it possible to present a sharper contrast and better understanding of the two as medical missionaries.

In Chapter I it was found that Peter Parker's motivation is discovered in an analysis of his religious experience. A manifest antagonism to religion was apparent in Parker's early life. From that time his passion in life became service to God. His college education was received at Amherst and Yale. It was at Yale College that the conviction grew that he could best serve God on the mission field. Parker studied medicine in order that he might be better equipped for his work. His missionary endeavor in China followed out Christ's command to teach,

to preach, and to heal. Throughout his ministry is seen his intense passion to serve his God, sustained by his personal fellowship with the Source of his strength and life.

The explanation for Peter Parker's accomplishments for the Kingdom of God are seen in several basic factors in his character and activities. He had a dynamic in his life that grew out of his relation to God. A sacrificial and courageous spirit enabled his work to go forward even under difficult circumstances. His work with the people began where they were; he adjusted to their customs and their needs. Characteristic of his life was his constant growth and striving for improvement in every undertaking. His medical skill, too, was a major factor in his accomplishments in the service of God.

Chapter II presented Albert Schweitzer's motivation for his work. Inherent in the nature of Schweitzer was a deep sympathy for the suffering of all living creatures, and a philosophical and independent mind. These characteristics were the bases of Schweitzer's reverence for life. By "Reverence for Life" he meant the maintaining of all life, whether plant, animal, or human, at its highest point of development. He devoted himself completely to this end. A second basic factor in his motivation was his sense of gratitude. He had a strong sense of debt for the many blessings which destiny had bestowed upon him. Out of gratitude for these blessings, he gave his life to the service of mankind.

Schweitzer's versatility was an important factor in his missionary attainments. The independent nature of his work gave opportunity for him to utilize his many abilities. Together with his

great capacity went a profound humility. A sacrificial spirit was particularly important for a man of his mental and artistic attainments. He had to give up many activities which he loved in order to enter upon his missionary work. He had before him the goal of perfection in every undertaking of life, and strove to attain it. His medical skill giving expression to his reverence for life brought him to a high level of perfection as a missionary doctor.

A comparison of Peter Parker and Albert Schweitzer reveals marked differences in their motivation and striking similarities in character traits. It was seen in Chapter III that Schweitzer's ideals were directed toward the temporal and physical welfare of humanity; whereas Parker was interested in the eternal and spiritual welfare of those among whom he ministered. Schweitzer's authority for his life and thought centered in his own rational processes and knowledge dictated by his immediate consciousness; whereas Parker surrendered the authority of his thinking to the authority of the Scripture. Schweitzer felt sufficient unto himself; whereas Parker depended upon his mystical union with Christ for the source of his power. Schweitzer was very grateful to those persons through whom he received blessings; whereas Parker's gratitude was directed more toward God than to the instrument of the blessing. In the goals and motivation of their lives they were antithetical.

In many character traits and skills, the two men were similar. They had a sacrificial spirit and no undertaking daunted them. They had perfection for their goal and did not rest until they approximated it in all their activities. Both were able medical men, and utilized

their skill to the full on behalf of the people they served.

Schweitzer's motivation sprang from his own nature and the authority of his own thinking. From that motivation his missionary activities were primarily humanitarian in emphasis. Peter Parker's motivation was rooted in a spiritual relation to God. This type of motivation prompted missionary activities dedicated to winning the unsaved millions of China to Christ. Both men had character traits in common which proved essential for their missionary accomplishments.



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